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HARVARD LAW REVIEW.

Published monthly, during the Academic Year, by Harvard Law Students.

SUBSCRIPTION PRICE, \$2.50 PER ANNUM. 35 CENTS PER NUMBER.

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THE LAW SCHOOL. — Several unexpected changes in the conduct of courses in the School have been necessitated by the ill health of Professor Williston. By the advice of his physician, Professor Williston will remain away for the remainder of the School year. His absence is much to be regretted, for by the thorough character of his work and his geniality of manner he has won the high regard of both the Faculty and the students. Of the courses which he conducted, Professor Ames has taken Bills and Notes for the remainder of the year, and First Year Contracts temporarily. The latter course is to be turned over on the 1st of February to Mr. George Rublee of last year's graduating class. Professor Beale has taken charge of Civil Procedure. With Mr. Rublee's coming, Professor Ames will reassume charge of Suretyship, which Professor Langdell has conducted in his stead since Professor Williston's absence.

LORD BLACKBURN. — The greatest English common law judge of recent years, died on January 8, at his country place in Ayrshire, Scotland. He resigned his office as one of the Lords of Appeal in Ordinary in 1888, and it has been understood that his health has since been gradually failing. He was a Scotchman, born in 1813, educated at Eton, and at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he was eighth wrangler in 1835. In 1838 he received the degree of M. A., and in the same year was called to the bar at the Inner Temple, and joined the Northern Circuit. In 1845 he published his admirable little treatise on "The Effect of the Contract of Sale on the Legal Rights of Property and Possession in Goods, Wares, and Merchandize." This is almost a model text-book; it has had a great influence in shaping the law, and it forms the basis of Benjamin's book, in those parts of the subject which it covers. Lord Blackburn said of this little book in 1883, in a private letter, that it "was written when I had literally nothing else to do, as I had then no business at all. I took great pains with it, more as a means of teaching myself than with any hope of making a valuable book: but now, after considerable experience, I am pleased to find how little I should alter,

if I were to write the book afresh." A second edition was published in 1885, edited by J. C. Graham. From Michaelmas, 1852, to Trinity, 1858, in the eight volumes of Ellis & Blackburn, and the one volume of Ellis, Blackburn, & Ellis, Blackburn was one of the reporters to the Queen's Bench.

In speaking of his appointment to the bench in 1859, Foss says of him, in his Biographical Dictionary, with a tempered approbation which sounds oddly now: "Though with no considerable business as a counsel, he was esteemed a sound lawyer, and after twenty years' experience at the bar he was appointed a judge of the Queen's Bench in June, 1859, and received the customary knighthood."

He had never "taken silk," and it was a strange departure from precedent to appoint a man to be a judge who had not been Queen's Counsel; it created a great stir. It was Lord Campbell who did this. Campbell had become Chancellor on June 18, 1859, and as early as July 3 we find in his diary the following entry: "I have already got into great disgrace by disposing of my judicial patronage on the principle of *detur digniori*. Having occasion for a new judge to succeed Erle, made Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, I appointed Blackburn, the fittest man in Westminster Hall, although wearing a stuff gown; whereas several Whig Queen's Counsel M. P.s were considering which of them would be the man, not dreaming that they could all be passed over. They got me well abused in the Times and other newspapers, but Lyndhurst has defended me gallantly in the House of Lords."

Campbell, a Scotchman himself, and Chief Justice of the Queen's Bench from 1850 to 1859, had had Blackburn for his reporter for six of these years, and he knew his man. The wisdom of the appointment was soon abundantly shown. Blackburn's judicial opinions rank among the very best of his time. His later promotion, in 1876, to be one of the Lords of Appeal in Ordinary, was handsomely earned; and when he retired, about eight years ago, he had not his peer upon the English bench. Strong men remain there, but one hardly knows yet where to turn for that combination of sound thinking, exact and instructive discrimination, and large, rational, and just exposition by which the law of all English-speaking countries has profited for these many years.

A RECORD OF THE COMMEMORATIVE EXERCISES OF LAST JUNE. — The Harvard Law School Association has just published, in pamphlet form, an account of the exercises of June 25 last. These exercises, it will be remembered, marked the ninth annual meeting of the Association, and, more particularly, the twenty-fifth anniversary of Professor Langdell's appointment as Dean of the School. The notable gathering on that occasion was in his especial honor. The well known portrait of Professor Langdell, painted by F. P. Vinton, Esq., and reproduced in the HARVARD LAW REVIEW for March, 1893, is here excellently reproduced as the frontispiece of the pamphlet. Then follow, in full, Sir Frederick Pollock's oration, delivered in Sanders Theatre, and the after-dinner addresses of the invited guests given in the Hemenway Gymnasium. The oration is too widely known to need further comment; but it may not be amiss to direct particular attention to the addresses of President Eliot and Professor Langdell, for they contain much of interest concerning the vicissitudes, the bold experiments, and finally the material and intellectual